

Western Cape Govt strengthens future of patient health information exchange with regional SNOMED membership in Africa

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LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, August 25, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Western Cape Government is the first regional member on the African continent to adopt the use of SNOMED CT, the most comprehensive global clinical terminology. Adoption of SNOMED CT in Western Cape will enable health information exchange between the region's participating medical institutions, in addition to satisfying requirements of the 2014 National Health Normative Standards Framework.



The Western Cape is the third largest populated province in South Africa after Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, with a population of approximately 7 million. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability of the Western Cape Department of Health was a major game changer in the fight against COVID-19. The ICT-related lessons from the last three years will be leveraged to do business differently, including improving access to care beyond the walls of our health facilities, and to address the quadruple burden of disease.

In 2019, an electronic health record (EHR) roadmap developed in the Western Cape Province determined terminological mapping services as a priority element of an interoperable EHR. In 2020, Western Cape Government: Health and Wellness successfully procured mapping services to improve the user experience of front-line clinical staff when they electronically capture patient clinical data. To make full use of procured terminological services and ensure an interoperable

future, in July 2022, the Western Cape Government entered into the first regional membership agreement for the use of SNOMED CT on the African continent. This regional membership with SNOMED International extends SNOMED CT to all Western Cape health facilities, public and private, while at the same time benefiting from the ongoing maintenance and evolution of SNOMED CT. Specifically, planned use of SNOMED CT includes use within the Clinical Interface Terminology Service accessible through the patient administration and clinical system across the public health hospitals in Western Cape, as well as use within primary care health facilities and the private sector as it relates to the provisioning of healthcare services.

SNOMED CT is the world's most comprehensive health terminology. Founded in 2007 by nine charter nations, SNOMED International is a not-for-profit, member-owned and driven international organization that has grown to serve 43 Member countries. A resource with comprehensive, scientifically validated clinical content, SNOMED CT enables the consistent representation of clinical content in EHRs. SNOMED CT is mapped to many other international standards and enables clinicians to record data with enhanced accuracy and consistency, supported by an active and engaged community of practice.

According to Dr Krish Vallabhjee, Chief Director of the Western Cape Government: Health and Wellness department's Strategic Cluster, "The Department is making steady progress towards building an electronic health record through multiple inter-operable systems. Our membership of SNOMED and access to its clinical terminology service is a major step up on this journey, that will enable, improve, and simplify the uptake and accuracy of our clinical patient records and more specifically coding patient encounters. Accurate coding is an essential pre-requisite to development of diagnostic related groups (DRGs) and costing/resource allocation to services on the path to University Health Coverage. There will be an onboarding process unfolding in the next few months."

SNOMED International CEO, Don Sweete extends an energetic welcome to SNOMED International's newest regional membership, Western Cape. "The SNOMED International organization and broader Community of Practice welcomes Western Cape to our growing network," Don said. "We are excited that the benefits of SNOMED CT will be extended throughout Western Cape and we look forward to supporting and exploring this model of regional membership. We know the implementation and integration of SNOMED CT into the EHR will contribute to greater interoperability and therefore improved patient service and health outcomes."

[Visit here](#) to learn more about Western Cape Government and their EHR roadmap.

To learn more about how SNOMED CT can enable achievement of digital health priorities, visit www.snomed.org.

Media Contacts

Mark van der Heever
Western Cape Government: Health and Wellness
mark.vanderheever@westerncape.gov.za

Kelly Kuru
SNOMED International
comms@snomed.org

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